



News Release

Rhode Island District

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Hearing set in Warwick for small business owners to comment about excessive federal regulatory enforcement

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – Small business owners, community leaders and representatives of trade associations concerned about excessive enforcement of federal rules can voice their complaints at a U.S. Small Business Administration Regulatory Fairness Board Hearing in Warwick, R.I. on Thursday, September 29, from 8:30 a.m. to noon.

The hearing will be held at the Warwick Public Library, 600 Sandy Lane, Warwick, R.I.

SBA's acting National Ombudsman Peter Sorum, members of SBA's Region I Regulatory Fairness Board, and representatives of federal regulatory agencies will hear comments and complaints about regulatory enforcement and compliance.

"One of the biggest concerns small business owners face is unfair enforcement of federal regulations. They also worry about telling their stories because they fear retaliation by federal agencies," Sorum said. "Small business owners want to play by the rules and comply with federal regulations," he added, "and we want to encourage federal regulators to assist business owners with compliance rather than go straight to the penalty stage."

This forum offers small business owners a chance to express their concerns about federal compliance practices in SBA's Rhode Island District area.

Comments and complaints presented during the hearing will be directed to the appropriate federal regulatory agency. This information will also be shared with federal officials in the Ombudsman's annual report to Congress, and with managers of federal regulatory agencies to assist them with their enforcement actions. The National Ombudsman's authority to respond to comments on compliance issues is limited to federal regulatory

enforcement matters and does not include concerns about obtaining federal contracts, regulations in general, or securing guaranteed loans.

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The Rhode Island hearing is open to the public. Those wishing to testify should contact Normand T. Deragon at (401) 528-4561 Extension 4576, or by email at normand.deragon@sba.gov before the hearing. Should a small business owner or representative be unable to attend, written testimony may be sent in advance of the hearing to be included in the public record. Send advance written testimony to Normand T. Deragon, U.S. Small Business Administration, 380 Westminster Street, Suite 511, Providence, RI 02903-3246.

Comments and concerns about federal enforcement actions can be addressed directly to SBA's Office of the National Ombudsman at 1-888-734-3247 (REGFAIR). For more information about the national ombudsman and this hearing, you may visit the National Ombudsman's Web site at www.sba.gov/ombudsman.

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